

# Williamsburg Conservation Update

## Williamsburg Soil & Water Conservation District

### 2013 Annual Report

502 Martin Luther King Jr. Highway, Kingstree, SC 29556  
843-354-9621 ext. 3 phone 843-354-5463 fax

#### Board of Commissioners

Brian McClam  
Chairman

Jayne D. Carsten  
Vice-Chairman

Frances McClary  
Secretary & Treasurer

Atwood McIntosh

Scott Williamson

#### Associate Commissioners

Charles B. Cantley

John I. Culbreath

Ruth E. Brown

#### Commissioner Emeritus

Richard A. Gamble

William D. Bodiford

James J. Dukes Jr.

#### District Coordinator

Denise Smith

#### NRCS

#### Conservation Program

#### Manager

Trinette Vereen

#### Soil Conservation Tech.

Anthony Parson

#### Our Purpose:

**The protection of our environment through the wise use of our natural resources.**



### The L. Claude McClary Conservation Achievement Award



### Tony Norris

This year the Board lost a most precious commissioner, Mr. L. Claude McClary, who faithfully served on the Board since March of 1975. Mr. McClary served actively in all capacities on the Board until he retired and became Commissioner Emeritus. The Board felt compelled to honor Mr. McClary and his many years of commitment and service. This year our Conservation Achievement Award was changed to the L. Claude McClary Conservation Achievement Award. This award is based on the outstanding conservation work the individual has performed on their land. The 2013 recipient of the award was Tony Norris of Norris Farms.

Farming isn't always easy, even under the best conditions, and when the land itself doesn't seem to cooperate, it may leave many farmers wondering what to do. Farmer Tony Norris was in a similar situation while farming 1,700 acres of cropland. While his overall operation was very productive, he had about 104 acres of land that was very low and hard to farm. "With all the wetness and low slope of the land, that portion of the farm was twice as hard to farm as the rest, cost more in nutrients to keep productive and yielded 40 percent less in crops" stated Norris. This realization and a great love of nature led Norris to a good solution: a Wetlands Reserve Program easement.

Norris was raised on a farm and took over the management of his father-in-law's farm in 1988. With the help of his father and sons managing the day to day operations, it is a family business. To restore the area to its natural state, they created swells and potholes and inserted ditch plugs. Norris has created a rich and welcoming environment for wildlife habitat at the site by providing additional cover through the planting of longleaf pines, hardwood trees, shrubs and native warm season grasses. He also planted food plots and has saw an abundance of wildlife. "I have been very pleased with my decision to restore the land to its original environment, and would recommend WRP to others who enjoy nature and would love to see it thrive" said Norris. The project has had great results and was an effective use of his property.

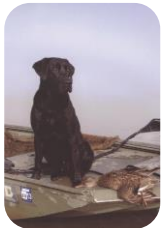
Pictured above – Ed Norris, Commissioner Brian McClam, Tony Norris, T. J. and Little Tony Norris.

### Arbor Day

In South Carolina, Arbor Day is celebrated on the first Friday in December. The Williamsburg SWCD observed it by providing 500 sycamore trees to fourth grade students across the county. Each student got a seedling to take home, plant and watch grow. Trees give us countless benefits like homes for people and animals, protection from the wind and erosion, paper products, oxygen, and of course, nuts and fruits.



## Photography Contest



In the Williamsburg Conservation District's annual photography Contest, the winners were: Will Timmons who won first place in the Rural Life category and Alexa Inman who won first place in the Landscapes category and the Trees

and Plants category. Both students attend Williamsburg Academy. All students in grades 9-12 were eligible to enter. Their winning photos are displayed at the Conservation District office.



## Poster Contest

Ms. Crystal Mercer's third grade class at Williamsburg Academy won first place in the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District's Poster Contest in 2013. The topic of the contest was "Where Does Your Watershed?" which helped the students to understand the importance of protecting our waterways. The class received an ice cream party as their prize.



## FFA Competition



In February, the District helped sponsor the FFA Wildlife Career Development Competition which hosted over 200 students from around the state. The competition is among the most scientifically challenging of all the events conducted by the SC FFA Organization. Preparation requires considerable study and practice in the classroom and outdoor settings. The event was conducted by faculty of the Forestry Management Technology Program of Horry-Georgetown Technical College. FFA teams from 30 high schools in South Carolina competed for the title of State Champion. Students earned the opportunity to demonstrate their technical and management skills as related to wildlife, habitat and harvesting regulations. Their knowledge was tested through a written exam, plant, animal and equipment identification stations, and a team activity related to wildlife.

## Essay Contest

The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District conducts an Essay Contest each year. The contest is open to elementary and junior high students. The topic of the contest this year was "Where Does Your Watershed?". The students' essays researched information about our watershed, what effects we have on our watershed and the ways we can protect it. 122 essays were received from four schools in the county.

The winners of this year's competition receiving a certificate and cash prize were: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade – Bryton Tanner of Hemingway Day School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade – Kayra Gray of Hemingway Day School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Gabriel Cook of Hemingway Day School, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade – Matthew Howard of Williamsburg Academy and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade – Dylan Atkinson of Williamsburg Academy. Honorable Mention went to 5<sup>th</sup> grader Hailey Gaskins of Hemingway Day School and the Teacher who submitted the Most Essays was Mrs. Laura Jones of Williamsburg Academy.

The students who placed 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in each grade also receiving an award were 5<sup>th</sup> Grade – Joel Ferland and James Allen Moore, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade – Russ Feagin and Morgan Morris, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade – Hannah Morris and Allen Carsten and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade - Cliff Small and Joshua Graham.



Pictured: Winners of the Williamsburg Conservation District's Essay Contest - Bryton Tanner, Kayra Gray, Gabriel Cook, Matthew Howard, Mrs. Laura Jones and Dylan Atkinson.

All programs and services of the Conservation District, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and DNR-Land, Water and Conservation Division are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, marital status, political beliefs or handicap.



## Change of Commissioners

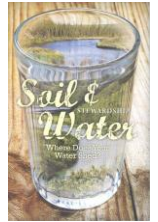
There were many changes to the board in 2013. The Board of Commissioners lost two respected and dedicated commissioners in 2013. L. Claude McClary who served on the Board since March of 1975, was passionate about conservation and worked hard to protect our resources. T. Neil Mishoe, who served on the board since 2004, cared deeply about our county and wanted to be involved in any way he could to preserve it. Both men contributed greatly to the work of the board and will really be missed. James J. Dukes retired from the Board and was given Commissioner Emeritus status. Serving on the Board since 1993, he was truly interested in things that promoted our county as a whole and he maintained equipment for the board among his many contributions. Two new commissioners Atwood McIntosh and Scott Williamson took office in 2013 and a new associate commissioner, Ruth Brown came aboard.



## Soil Stewardship Week

**Where Does Your Watershed?** Soil Stewardship Week April 28 – May 4, 2013

Did you know that you live in a watershed? Our actions, habits, and decisions impact our watersheds. Every inch of land on planet Earth is part of a watershed. You can define a watershed as: “All of the water under or draining off of a particular watershed goes into the same place.” Our actions make an impact on the watershed, whether good or bad. Littering, poor trash disposal, improper automobile maintenance and pet waste are examples of ways our watershed can be harmed. When it rains, these things are washed into rivers and streams. Proper disposal and good conservation habits can protect our waterways and our water supply. You can make a difference!



## SC Conservation Partnership Conference

The joint conference of conservation districts and their partners was held in Columbia on February 26 & 27, 2013. The theme was Coming Together For Conservation. Commissioners McClary and McIntosh attended receiving information from Naturalist Rudy Mancke, State Climatologist Hope Mizzell, Wildlife Biologist Richard Morton, Greenwood Commissioner Brad Martin, Mike Montebello of SC DHEC, and more. They also attended the Legislative Reception to honor our representatives.

## Local Students Attend Youth Workshop



Three local high school students represented the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District at the 2013 Conservation Districts Youth Workshop held in June at Lander University. Briley Steele, a rising senior at Williamsburg Academy, received a scholarship for his outstanding performance on the workshop assessments. Emma Easler, also a rising senior at Williamsburg Academy and Mildred Easler, a rising sophomore at Williamsburg Academy also attended the week long camp. The students



received useful information about soils, farming, forestry, geology, reptiles, and conservation. They enjoyed numerous activities including canoeing, a high ropes course, a lumberjack race, fishing, archery, hiking and science experiments. The participants were presented information on the many job opportunities available in the fields of agriculture and conservation which influenced the career paths of many of the students.

Each year the Williamsburg Conservation District, with the help of generous camp sponsors, send students to attend the Youth Workshop by covering all costs for attending.

## 4H Camp

4-H Summer Camp has been a tradition in SC for over 50 years. Held at Camp Long in Aiken, its focus is to help young people develop friendships, responsibility, self-confidence, and the creativity they need to succeed in all areas of life. In 2013 the Williamsburg Conservation District sponsored two students to attend Brittany Singletary, and Ashaunti Cooper. The camper's activities included water sports, team sports, a climbing wall, talent show, archery, paddle boats, nature hikes, and more. To find out more about 4-H activities, contact Jolie Brown at 355-6106.





## Goat Management Seminar

On February 19, 2013 an informal meeting was held for current goat owners and anyone interested in starting a goat operation. Hosted by Tom Tanner, the participants received information from Lee Van Vlake, the Clemson Extension Area Livestock and Forages Agent of the Pee Dee Region about “Getting you pastures ready for the summer grazing season”. Local goat owners were invited to attend.

## Just Water?

Do you know what you are drinking? Have you ever wondered what kind of water to purchase? Not all bottled water is the same. Water used to be a plain and simple drink that came from the tap. Today, there are dizzying arrays of bottled water products that fill the grocery shelves. But what are the differences between the all the various brands and types of water you can buy?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates the way bottled water is described, and the terms are based on either the source of the water or how it's been processed.

So be sure to check the label before you drink.

**Artesian Well Water** comes from a confined, underground water source.

**Well Water** is brought to the surface by pumps from an aquifer (a water-bearing rock or soil formation located underground).

**Distilled Water** is water that has been evaporated and allowed to condense, which removes all minerals and contaminants.

**Drinking water** is tap water that has been filtered and disinfected by water treatment plants.

**Natural Mineral Water** contains only the minerals present in the water as it flows from the ground. Mineral water not labeled “natural” may have had minerals added or removed.

**Sparkling Water** is any water that contains naturally occurring or added carbon dioxide. Many brands of mineral water, spring water, and other bottled waters are marketed as sparkling water. Sparkling water is considered a soft drink and is not regulated as bottled water.

**Spring Water** comes from an underground source from which water flows naturally to the surface. It must be collected only at a spring.

**Natural Spring Water** is enriched by minerals from the rocks through which it flows.



## Board Meetings

The Board of Commissioners meet on the first Tuesday of each month to address the issues related to conservation and the natural resources in Williamsburg County. 2013 was a busy year and as part of their efforts the board met with many individuals during the year. The Board met with Jolie Brown of the Williamsburg County 4H, Corey Craig, the Forestry & Natural Resource Agent, Richard Livingston of the SC Highway Department, Alex Montgomery of the Boys to Men Club, Marc Cribb of SC Department of Natural Resources, Maria Whitehead of the Nature Conservancy, Billy Keels, the State Director of Agriculture, Keith Cox, the Regional Coordinator for Agricultural Education, Ricky Scott, Williamsburg County Solid Waste Director and Vincent McCrea, Williamsburg County Environmental Services Director.

## Recycle Your Plastics Too

The recycling center on County Camp Road at the Public Works office now has a plastics recycling bin. The Hemingway and Greeleyville sites also have a plastic recycling bin. Please be mindful to collect your plastics with the recycling symbol on them and take them for recycling. You can find a list of the recycling centers on the county website at <http://www.williamsburgcounty.sc.gov/index.aspx?page=140> Did you know? Magazines can be recycled with newspapers.



## Natural Resources Conservation Service

### USDA

### Secretary Vilsack Launched USDA “StrikeForce” Initiative to Boost Rural Economic Growth and Opportunity

March 28, 2013—

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will launch its “StrikeForce” initiative in 10 additional states, including South Carolina. The primary goal of the StrikeForce initiative is to increase partnership with rural communities and leverage community resources in targeted, persistent poverty areas. Vilsack noted that through the StrikeForce initiative, USDA will do more to partner with local and state governments and community organizations on projects that promote economic devel-

opment and job creation.

In South Carolina, the initiative will target the counties of Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Calhoun, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Florence, Hampton, Jasper, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter, and Williamsburg.

“The StrikeForce Initiative is helping us direct additional resources to better serve producers in persistent poverty rural communities,” said Vilsack. “We are focusing on these identified high poverty counties to help improve the

quality of life of producers and their communities and to accelerate implementation of conservation practices on their land.”

Participants in the StrikeForce include the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rural Development, the Farm Service Agency, the Food and Nutrition Service and the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach.

#### Conservation Success

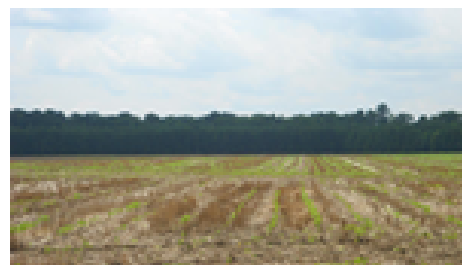
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Conservation Stewardship Program
- Wetlands Reserve Program

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) 2013

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to a maximum term of ten years in length. These contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.

Owners of land in agricultural or forest production or persons who are engaged in livestock, agricultural or forest production on eligible land and that have a natural resource concern on the land may participate in EQIP.

## USDA-NRCS



Residue Management No-till, strip-till)



Cover Crop

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) 2013 Achievements

In FY 2013, 57 contracts were awarded on 7,016.8 acres totaling \$616,063.91.

Contracts were awarded in the Long Leaf Pine Initiative (4), Seasonal High Tunnels (12), one tunnel was installed. Organic Transition (2), one contract was completed. Strike Force Initiative (30) Locally Led (4), Historically underserved (4).

Some practices included residue management (No-till, strip-till), cover crops, nutrient management (precision ag-grid sampling, long leaf tree planting, grass planting for livestock and livestock watering systems, fencing, etc.

### Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment. 6 contracts were awarded on 3,384.40 acres totaling \$208,470.

### Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) was a voluntary program that offered landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property.

The goal of NRCS was to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program.

In 2013, 1 WRP easement was awarded on 196.75 acres.

Right: Existing WRP site.





# 5 Steps to Assistance

## How to Get Assistance from NRCS for Farms, Ranches and Forests

1

### PLANNING

Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.

2

### APPLICATION

With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.

3

### ELIGIBILITY

Find out if you're eligible for NRCS' variety of financial assistance programs.

4

### RANKING

NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.

5

### IMPLEMENTING

Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

## Get Started with NRCS

### Do you farm or ranch and want to make improvements to the land that you own or lease?

Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical and financial assistance to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

1

### Planning

To get started with NRCS, we recommend you stop by your local NRCS field office.

**We'll discuss your vision for your land.**

NRCS provides landowners with free technical assistance, or advice, for their land. Common technical assistance includes: resource assessment, practice design and resource monitoring. Your conservation planner will help you determine if financial assistance is right for you. Please keep in mind that financial assistance is paid when work is complete.

2

### Application

**We'll walk you through the application process. To get started on applying for**

**financial assistance, we'll work with you:**

- To fill out an AD 1026, which ensures a conservation plan is in place before lands with highly erodible soils are farmed. It also ensures no wetland areas are farmed.
- To meet other eligibility certifications.

Once complete, we'll work with you on the application, or CPA 1200.

Applications for most programs are accepted on a continuous basis, but they're considered for funding in different ranking periods. Be sure to ask your local NRCS district conservationist about the deadline for the ranking period to ensure you turn in your application in time.

3

### Eligibility

**As part of the application process, we'll make sure you are eligible.**

**To do this, you'll need to bring:**

- An official tax ID (Social Security number or an employer ID)
- A property deed or lease agreement to show you have control of the property; and
- A farm tract number.

If you don't have a farm tract number, you can get one from USDA's Farm Service Agency. Typically, the local FSA office is located in the same building as the local NRCS office. You only need a farm tract number if you're interested in financial assistance.

4

### Ranking

**NRCS will take a look at the applications and rank them**

**according to local resource concerns, the amount of conservation benefits the work will provide and the needs of applicants.**

5

### Implementing

**If you're selected, you can choose whether to sign the contract for the work to be done.**

Once you sign the contract, you'll be provided standards and specifications for completing the practice or practices, and then you will have a specified amount of time to implement. Once the work is implemented and inspected, you'll be paid the rate of compensation for the work if it meets NRCS standards and specifications.

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

To find out more, go to: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted)

## 2013 AFFILIATE MEMBERS

The Williamsburg Soil & Water Conservation District would like to recognize our Affiliate Members who are a vital part of our conservation team. Without the monetary support given by the Affiliates, we would not be able to carry out the many programs to promote conservation stewardship within the county. The Conservation District is committed to helping the landowners and educating the students of Williamsburg County. Thank you Affiliates! **This year the District added a level to our affiliate membership in which the money is specifically used to send students to one of the conservation camps available.**

### CAMP FUND CONTRIBUTORS

Floyd's Fertilizer  
Tri-County Cotton Growers, LLC  
Crop Production Services  
Meherrin Ag & Chemical  
The Citizens Bank

### CORPORATE

Wake Stone Corporation  
Longlands Plantation  
Farmers Telephone Cooperative  
Carsten Farms  
Williamsburg County Farm  
Bureau  
DSM Nutritional Products

### GOLD

Bank of Greeleyville  
Pepsi-Cola of Florence, LLC  
Venture Plantation  
Anderson Brothers Bank  
Charles Ingram Lumber Co., Inc.  
Palmetto Synthetics, LLC  
George C. Avent  
Santee Cooper  
Scotswood  
Yancey McGill

### SILVER

Kingstree Forest Products, Inc.  
H. E. Hemingway  
Richard A. Gamble  
McIntosh Farms, Inc.  
First Citizens Bank  
Never Fail Farm

### REGULAR

Archie Ward  
Sammy Squires  
Steve Squires  
Kingstree Federal  
Savings & Loan  
Bestway  
James J. Dukes  
Williamsburg County  
Development Board

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